

REMARKS

Claims 9-10 and 15-24 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 15, 17 and 18 have been amended, claims 1-8 and 11-14 have been canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter disclosed therein and claims 19-24 have been added. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication that claims 5-10 and 15-18 contain allowable subject matter.


The Office Action rejects claims 1-4 and 11-14 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Takagi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,434,640) in view of Sasakura (U.S. Patent No. 5,995,144). The cancellation of claims 1-4 and 11-14 renders their rejection moot. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

Moreover, the remaining independent claims 9-10, 15 and 17-18 have already been found allowable by the Examiner (Office Action, page 7, lines 3 and 11). As such, independent claims 9, 10, 15, 17 and 18, and their dependent claims, define patentable subject matter.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 9-10 and 15-24 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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